

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 SAJ-01 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

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R 091008Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2731

INFO COMUSMACTHAI BANGKOK

DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 9127

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PGOV TH

SUBJ: TRAVEL TO SOCIALIST COUNTRIES BY THAI LEFTISTS

REF: BANGKOK 7870

SUMMARY: SEVERAL PROMINENT THAI LEFTISTS HAVE REPORTEDLY LEFT THAILAND FOR SOCIALIST COUNTRIES IN EUROPE OR ASIA. THIS MAY BE A SIGN OF INCREASED DISILLUSIONMENT WITH OVERT POLITICAL ACTIVITIES. END SUMMARY.

1. BANGKOK NEWSPAPERS OF APRIL 8, 1976, REPORTED THAT A NUMBER OF PROMINENT LEFTISTS HAVE LEFT THAILAND FOR EASTERN EUROPE. NAMED WERE THIRAYUT BUNMI AND PHINIT CHARUSOMBAT, BOTH FORMER SECRETARIES GENERAL OF THE LEFTIST NATIONAL STUDENT CENTER OF THAILAND (NSCT). WIRAT SAKCHIRAPHAPHONG, DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF THAILAND, AND PRASAN MARUKKHAPHITHAK, UNSUCCESSFUL SOCIALIST CANDIDATE FOR PARLIAMENT, AND BROTHER OF CURRENT NSCT DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL CHIRACHAI MARUKKHAPHITHAK. THIRAYUT REPORTEDLY LEFT THAILAND ON MARCH 30, INTENDING EVENTUALLY TO VISIT CHINA, AND THE OTHER THREE LEFT ON APRIL 2. NEWS-PAPERS CLAIMED THAT OTHER PROMINENT LEFTISTS HAVE ALSO GONE ABROAD RECENTLY, BUT DID NOT NAME THEM.

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2. POLICE SOURCES CONFIRMED THE DEPARTURE OF THE FOUR ACTIVISTS TO AN EMBOFF, BUT SAID THAT THEY HAD NO POSITIVE INFORMATION ON ANY OTHERS HAVING LEFT RECENTLY, AND WERE NOT SURE OF THE FINAL DESTINATIONS. POLICE SAID THAT THEY EXPECTED THE FOUR TO RETURN TO THAILAND.

3. WHILE TRIPS TO FRIENDLY "SOCIALIST" COUNTRIES BY THAI ACTIVISTS ARE NOT UNCOMMON, THESE HAVE COME AT AN INTERESTING TIME. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE DEPARTURES ARE A SIGN OF INCREASING CONCERN AMONG LEFTISTS FOR THEIR PERSONAL SAFETY, CAUSED BY RECENT ASSASSINATIONS AND ARRESTS OF SEVERAL STUDENTS ON COMMUNIST CHARGES (SEE REFTEL). SOME ACTIVISTS MAY ALSO BE DISILLUSIONED WITH THE TREMENDOUS DEFEAT SUFFERED BY LEFTIST POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE APRIL 4 ELECTION. (THEY LOST 26 OF THE 32 SEATS THEY HAD HELD.) IF LEFTISTS ARE GIVING UP ON THE LEGITIMATE POLITICAL ARENA, AND FEEL THAT THEY MUST GO UNDERGROUND TO AVOID RETALIATION FOR THEIR ACTIVITIES, IN THE LONG TERM THIS TREND COULD BE OF BENEFIT TO THE COMMUNIST PARTY, AND IS AN UNFORTUNATE DEVELOPMENT FOR THAILAND. WHITEHOUSE

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## Message Attributes

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**Concepts:** SOCIALISM, POLITICAL LEADERS, VISITS  
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**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** ullricre  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
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**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
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**Reference:** 76 BANGKOK 7870  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** ullricre  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 02 JUN 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <02 JUN 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <28 SEP 2004 by ullricre>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** TRAVEL TO SOCIALIST COUNTRIES BY THAI LEFTISTS  
**TAGS:** PINT, PGOV, TH  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006